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DDA 77-2137

15 April 1977

Dear Admiral Turner:

After having written my paper, as I promised you I would, I would feel more comfortable if I availed myself of your offer to accept it on a personal, as opposed to an official, basis.

I apologize a bit for its length but I am reminded of Mark Twain's famous quotation--"If I had more time, I would write you a shorter letter." I have proceeded quickly to write it because you had mentioned you wished to do some reading on this matter over the weekend.

There are attached a series of documents which also bear on the substance of Thursday's conversation. The first, entitled "Agency Promotion Policy" is a copy of a document already enroute to you through official channels. In most cases the others are not of quite so recent vintage but are still valid and give insights into your area of inquiry.

I would close with a personal observation. I have rather enjoyed putting this paper together. I would personally appreciate receiving your honest reaction if it has been helpful to you in endeavoring to gain a human understanding of us as you obviously possess of the United States Navy.

/s/ John F. Blake

John F. Blake

Atts

DDA:JFBlake:kmg (14&15 Apr 77)

Distribution:

Orig - DCI (via [redacted] --by hand) w/atts

1 - DDA Subject

1 - JFB Chrono

DOWNGRADE TO UNCLASSIFIED
UPON REMOVAL OF ATTACHMENTS

Atts: JFB Paper on "The Cultures of the Agency", Briefing Paper "Agency Promotion Policy"--DDA 77-2073, CT Program (DDA 77-1944, "Agencywide Personnel Management Survey"--[redacted] of 27 Dec 76, "Education Characteristics of Agency Personnel"--1974 pamphlet (Recruitment Division), Wm.Bundy/Bush exchange (DDA 76-2704, -1921)

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THE CULTURES OF THE AGENCY

Whether there are many aspects to the Agency's culture or whether the Agency has manifold cultures is hard to say. In any event the matter has to be treated in the plural. I will endeavor to reflect on the culture of the organization, the culture of its people, the culture of its traditions, and the culture of senior officers.

The Organization

This Agency has never been a strong, centrally-controlled, monolithic structure. Its managerial style through the years perhaps can be compared to a large conglomerate in the private sector where the holding company established broad general policies but great latitude in their implementation was extended to the autonomous operating divisions. We have historically been a confederation of Directorates operating under general written administrative policies and day-to-day verbal guidance by the Director. The degree to which this concept prevailed obviously varied somewhat depending on the personality and background of each Director. Dr. Schlesinger, in his approximately five-month tenure, undoubtedly tried harder than any other Director to change the confederation into a federation and develop what he called the "single Agency concept."

Without giving a value judgment to the system there are some reasons why it has been so. Compartmentation, i.e., preventing the disclosure of knowledge of any given activity to those who are not directly responsible or participating, and "need to know", i.e., the furnishing of no more information to an individual than the person actually needs for the accomplishment of their responsibility has been one force working against centralization. I believe it also fair to say that the disposition or preoccupation of some past Directors, namely, Allen Dulles and Dick Helms, to be interested primarily in substance and not in administration, is another reason.

Another characteristic of the Agency organization has been, until recently, the maximum dependency on the line components accomplishing their tasks with the minimum of the existence of staff review levels. The Agency has depended, to a great degree, on the personal assumption of responsibility by its senior officers as opposed to a distributed sense of depending on multitudinous staff reviews before decisions are made. One reason for this was to keep the bureaucratic mechanism as slim as possible in order to ensure the quickest response possible. The events of the last two years have somewhat altered this schematic with the tripling of the size of the Office of General Counsel, the doubling of the size of the Office of Legislative Counsel and the Inspector General, the growth of a personal staff of the DDCI and the increase in the size of staff components that serve the Deputy Directors.

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The Culture of the People

I believe the two key ingredients have been the people possessing a passion for anonymity and the organization placing great reliance on the integrity of its people. One of the cultural shocks that we who are long-time professional servants of the organization have experienced in recent times is an obvious violation of both these principles.

A few observations on the matter of "passion for anonymity." I choose here to speak in personal terms because I believe it will make it more meaningful. You are an Admiral with some 30 years service and when you wear your uniform your accomplishments are physically visible to the world. You are at liberty, with some obvious exceptions, to speak to your wife, your family, your friends, and any audience of your choosing about your profession and your accomplishments. You can, and have, authored documents in your own name and established your bona fides as an expert in your chosen profession. All that is lacking for those of my level and experience--and yet we have not missed it or sought it because we knew the obligation we took unto ourselves. I believe it true in certain cases (but fortunately not so in mine) that some wives and some children of our senior officers during the years have not understood or appreciated this point and indeed, in certain cases, resented it. Our employees who from time to time have made significant contributions to the state of various arts or have made technological breakthroughs, cannot and never will receive the public acclaim to which they would be entitled if they were elsewhere employed in the Federal service. The fact that many of our people, who are intensely loyal to the Agency but yet are forced to live their life under cover and not be allowed to acknowledge their pride of Agency association, is another insight to this matter. The simple fact that while in attendance at a local social evening in Washington with people from the military, State, and friends who may be in the private sector, again precludes our people participating in a "give-and-take" discussion as to what they do, is again evidence of this crucial factor of professional anonymity.

Turning to the trust and integrity of our people, it has been a matter of fierce pride through the years that, until relatively recent times, we have run some [] people through the organization and never had a defection. It has been of equal pride that those people never tried to sell the results of their experience to the media. The fact that this Agency developed and then operated successfully for four years the U-2 program and it was never leaked is a good example of this point.

Another hallmark of the culture of our people is the acceptance of organizational demands and discipline. This is a civilian organization and there is no counterpart to the uniform code of military justice that imposes certain demands which, if not met, calls for the infliction of certain types of punishment. I would estimate that during the period of our very heavy involvement in Southeast Asia, i.e., circa 1965 to approximately 1973, we had somewhere around a total of [] people who accepted assignments in South Vietnam, [] and Laos. All of the assignments in South Vietnam

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were separated tours [redacted] The wives and children either remained in the States or lived in safehaven areas in the Philippines, Taipei, Hong Kong, etc. Now it must be remembered that the majority of these were career officers and not individuals hired under contract for the specific purpose of serving a given period of time in Southeast Asia. I believe it true to say that in the vast majority of cases of the career officers, they never envisioned when they joined serving a separate tour in what amounted to a war zone. They did it because they believed in the organization, they were disciplined, and they felt it was expected of them.

The career orientation of our professional staff is also imbued in our culture. Our professional attrition rate is about an annual 6 percent, by far the lowest in the Federal civilian service. While that attrition rate has remained fairly stable during the years, there has been a development that is somewhat worthy of note. Our average retirement rate in the last 5 years has been lowered by about 5 years from approximately 56 years of age to 51 years of age. While our people tend to continue to remain with us on a career basis they are obviously choosing to exercise retirement options at an earlier age.

I have striven above to try to give you a feel for the organizational and people culture. Believing I comprehend the understanding you seek to gain let me switch from "culture" to observations on three other matters which may be helpful to you. The first of these I express in the form of a question--"Are we one Agency?".

I answer this with both a "yes" and a "no." Up to this point I believe my observations have been objective but all that follows may well be subjective, or at least open to debate. To endeavor to answer the question proposed one must look individually at the four Directorates.

The Directorate of Administration thoroughly believes that we are one Agency if only because the totality of our resources and our energies are devoted to the Agency per se. We have no other goal to serve. At least 50 percent of this Directorate's personnel serve from time-to-time within the other Directorates either in the local area, overseas, or throughout the United States. Unlike the other Directorates, which have an identifiable end product and which may be viewed to a certain sense as an end in themselves, the Directorate of Administration is a means to an end. Its end is the successful administration of the Agency's business. I would next view the Directorate of Intelligence as agreeing that we are one Agency. The great rapport with the access to the collectors is a contribution to their end product. The support they receive from the central Agency facility is important to the production of their finished intelligence product. There does exist, I believe, although hard to measure, some uneasiness on the part of DDI personnel in being institutionally

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associated with what the press call the "Department of Dirty Tricks" and also, probably, with some of the past missteps of the Office of Security, i.e., mail openings, surveillances, etc. To oversimplify that point it is the age old conflict between the academic purest and the practical realist.

When one looks at the Directorate of Operations and the Directorate of Science & Technology the answer to the "one Agency question" is a good deal less clear. There exists amongst a great number of people in DDO a desire for a separatist philosophy, i.e., they should exist only by themselves with a 100 percent controlled organic administrative mechanism reporting to no one but their own leader. They believe they would be more secure, would have less visibility to the outside world, and would be relieved, for right or wrong, of many of the bureaucratic and administrative burdens imposed by the Agency itself. This is a philosophical issue wherein the debate could go on almost endlessly.

The Directorate of Science & Technology has a different type of perspective. In a certain sense much of that Directorate serves two immediate masters, i.e., the head of this Agency and the heads of the national reconnaissance program. The great successes of that Directorate and its predecessors, the OXCART, the family of photographic satellites, [redacted] etc., were all developed and operated at the national program level as opposed to a unilaterally controlled Agency undertaking. Much of this has been done under the "single managership concept" and with the tightest compartmentation from the rest of the Agency. As an analytical, and not a critical, observation it is my belief that much of DDS&T is the least woven into the fabric of the organization.

I would next offer a few words on our philosophy of development and qualifications for senior positions. Our philosophy, in a sense, is probably not too different than from what I understand from friends to be United States Navy tradition. As I understand it, in the Navy, if one looks forward to the command of an aircraft carrier he must have previous "deep draft" experience; a "brown shoe" Navy Captain is not automatically entitled to be a ship's skipper without previous qualifying sea command experience; a medical corps Rear Admiral cannot exercise command over a ship's Captain, etc. As I mentioned to you on Thursday, we too have our career tracks. With very, very few exceptions, and each exception through the years has been a very senior officer at a large post, no non-career DDO person can look forward to serving as a Chief of Station. To my certain memory, three former DDI's were, in a sense, eased out of their positions and sent abroad as Chiefs of Stations. One was Jack Smith [redacted] Rav Cline [redacted]

[redacted] and Ed Proctor [redacted]

It is my own opinion that there is valid justification that a COS should come up through the ranks in the same sense that the Navy calls for "deep draft" experience before capital ship command. Clandestine activity is a tricky

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business just like being a ship's skipper. Within the other Directorates, as a general statement, the Deputies and their Associates also come up an internal, vertical ladder. Currently this is true in the case of myself and Les Dirks. For reasons previously mentioned to you, I have had an unusual opportunity to serve in breadth in this organization, but the usual pattern for a Deputy is to have extensive experience in depth and not in breadth. Sayre Stevens' background is a bit unique. He started years ago as an analyst in the Office of Scientific Intelligence when that unit was originally in DDI. That unit was moved to DDS&T in 1963. At some point in time Sayre moved from OSI to become Director of the Office of Research and Development within DDS&T. He then became the Associate DDS&T and then, I believe because of both of his analytical background and familiarity of technical collection systems, was chosen to become the DDI.

A few other examples may be helpful to you. You mentioned Bob Gambino on Thursday. There are many disciplines represented in the Office of Security but two qualifications are really demanded to be considered to be Director of that office. The backbone of their work is field investigations. A potential Director must have this experience. Another essentiality is serving overseas in a Security Officer's position so one can understand the different demands and problems that are encountered by our people in living abroad.

If Office Heads in DDA, DDI, and DDS&T cannot aspire to be COS's, there still remain other opportunities. The obvious ones are to be the Director or Associate Director of their Directorate; they can, and some have, served as the Inspector General, as the Comptroller, or, as in the case today of a special assistant to the DCI or DDCI.

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Training also plays a part in our developmental pattern. It is expected today that an individual assuming senior position would have attended either our internally sponsored Midcareer Course or Senior Seminar. Both are Agency over-view courses which give the attendee a very good perception as to how the Agency is organized and operated. The Senior Seminar is rather an in-house, mini, service war college. From an external point of view, attendance at either NWC, ICAF, or a service war college also gives our people a worthwhile developmental experience and exposure to the thinking of peers in other national security services of the government.

I would lastly observe a difference amongst the Directorates in developing people. My Directorate, by far, is the more heterogeneous in nature. We have eight line functions and, although there is some affinity between and among some, i.e., Personnel, Security, and Training, they can also be viewed as stand-alone functions. At the other end of the spectrum is the homogeneity of the function of the Directorate of Operations. In an oversimplified sense, operations are operations and what differs is the environment in which they are conducted and the language spoken. In my opinion, it is easier for a DDO to understand and relate to the totality of his functions than it is for a DDA. The DDI and the DDS&T fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

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I was next going to make some observations on the role of a senior officer in this Agency. I will endeavor to keep this brief because implicitly I have discussed it above. They obviously had three roles to play. They have to oversee the discharge of the substance of their responsibilities. In my case I am responsible for administering eight major Agency programs. Sayre Stevens, on the other hand, is responsible for the production of the finished intelligence product. Secondly, they are responsible for the management and efficient use of the resources of their component. In my case, I am responsible for some [] people and some []. Thirdly, we have the responsibility to support the Director in all ways.

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I would make only one additional comment. The degree to which the Deputies have external responsibilities vary quite a bit. Les Dirks is deeply involved with DoD on national reconnaissance matters; Bill Wells is obviously deeply involved with State; and Sayre Stevens in the NFIB community. My responsibilities are much more Agency related and the work is internally conducted, although, again, I have relations with State, the General Services Administration, and some elements of DoD which render us support.

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